

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/556,358  
Reply to OA dated November 1, 2006

REMARKS

Claim 1 is amended in order to more clearly define the claimed invention. Claims 3 and 8 are amended in order to present those claims in independent form. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added. It is believed that this amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action mailed November 1, 2006.

The allowability of Claims 3, 8, 9, 13, 15, 17 and 19 is acknowledged. As indicated above, Claims 3 and 8 are now in independent form. It is believed that Claims 3, 8, 9, 13, 15, 17 and 19 are now in condition for allowance and their allowance is respectfully requested.

The present invention is a joint connector block having a block body with a plurality of connector-fitting chambers arranged in a line on one side of the block body for receiving connectors of at least one outside wiring harness, and a busbar-receiving part communicating with the connector-fitting chambers on an opposite side of the block body. A plurality of longitudinal busbars, each of which includes at least one branch terminal projecting in the connector-fitting chamber and at least one pair of clip terminals are situated on the side of the busbar-receiving part. A plurality of lateral busbars, each of which includes at least one branch terminal projecting in the connector-fitting chamber and a connecting part to be connected to the pair of the clip terminals are situated on the side of the busbar-receiving part. The lateral busbar is connected to the longitudinal busbar crossing the longitudinal busbar at right angles. The branch terminals of the longitudinal busbars and the branch terminals of the lateral busbars are arranged in a line in the connector-fitting chambers for connecting with connectors of the at least one outside wiring harness.

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Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 12, 14, 16 and 18 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Nakanishi (U.S. Patent No. 6,910,923). Reconsideration and removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

As indicated above, Claim 1, from which all the remaining claims of this rejection depend, is amended to more clearly define the invention. In particular, the claimed joint connector block is now defined as having the branch terminals of the longitudinal busbars and the branch terminals of the lateral busbars arranged in a line in the connector-fitting chambers for connecting with connectors of at least one outside wiring harness.

It is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention distinguishes over the cited fuse module of Nakanishi, as Nakanishi does not disclose or suggest the claimed branch terminals for connecting with connectors.

Additionally, regarding the rejection of Claims 7 and 18, it is alleged in the Office Action that cover (10B) of the body block (11b) of Nakanishi abuts against alleged longitudinal busbars (20) and lateral busbars (1B). It is respectfully submitted that cover (10B) does not abut against alleged longitudinal busbars (20), as they are disposed on sides of the body block (11b) and thus could not prevent the alleged longitudinal busbars (20) from slipping out.

In view of the amendment to Claim 1, and the above remarks, removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

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Claims 10, 11 and 20 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakanishi. Reconsideration and removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of Claims 10, 11 and 20 depending from Claim 1, the amendment to Claim 1 and the above remarks, it is believed that the claimed invention is distinct from and non-obvious in view of Nakanishi. Therefore, removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

It is believed that Claims 1 - 20 are now in condition for allowance. Allowance of Claims 1 - 20 is respectfully requested.

If, there are any issues of a minor nature remaining, the Examiner is urged to contact the Applicant's attorney, the undersigned at Area Code (202) 659-2930.

In the event that any fees are due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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